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THE QUEST

AMERICAN HISTORY -- TRAVEL -- LITERATURE

A recent letter from Paul Angle of the Chicago Historical Society to the Director of the Rutgers University Press seems much more significant than the usual routine praise of newly published books. The letter ends with a sentence which strikes a responsive chord: "The trouble with us is that we are too timid about letting our needs be known." (It is the fixed policy of THE FLYLEAF to struggle to overcome this timidity as far as possible.) The letter continues:

I have just finished reading The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln. This book, in my opinion, should be on the shelves of every library in the country that attempts to do more than supply its patrons with the latest best sellers. It is not only the definitive source for the writings and speeches of Lincoln, most quoted of American statesmen; it is also a biographical reference work to which a librarian will turn constantly for the identification of hundreds of persons too obscure for inclusion in the standard compilations. Its notes, moreover, constitute as close to a publication of the long-impounded Lincoln papers in the Library of Congress as we are likely to have. Finally, for the serious reader, it is the indispensable biography of Lincoln. How can one get closer to the man than through his own writings -- the routine letters from his law office, the zestful letters of politics, the hundreds of telegrams ordering executions suspended, as well as the great state documents?

This nine-volume collection was all too briefly mentioned in the February FLYLEAF. A key work, of basic importance -- \$115.00.

The following works, of varied interest and actually in Fondren awaiting donors, come under the broad heading of Americana:

C. W. Webber, Romance of Natural History. Philadelphia, 1852. \$14.70. A "hunter-naturalist" narrative, with a chapter on "The Texas Hunters."

Karl Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, Travels through North America. 2 vols. Philadelphia, 1828. \$7.50.

Henry James, The Real Thing. New York, 1893. \$1.25.

Elias Darnell, A journal containing an account of the hardships, sufferings, battles and captivities of those heroic Kentucky volunteers commanded by General Winchester in 1812-13. Philadelphia, 1854. \$10.00.

Frederick Gerhard. Illinois As It is. Chicago, 1857. \$7.00. (Views with considerable satisfaction the growth of Chicago (population 83,509 in 1855) and predicts a "splendid and Magnificent future."

The pro-slavery argument as maintained by the most distinguished writers of the Southern States. Charleston, 1852. \$10.00.

John Pendleton Kennedy, Letters to the Citizens of the Fourth Congressional District. 1848. \$6.30.

M. Perrid du Lac, Travels through the Two Louisians, and among the Savage Nations of the Missouri. London, 1807. \$16.80.

And here are two we'd like to order:

Bruce Rogers, PI. \$6.00. As a title, Matches our own RI for brevity. Of importance for the history of American printing.

Thomas Franklin Currier, A Bibliography of Oliver Wendell Holmes. New York University Press, 1953. About \$22.00.

Another group, ordered here and there as opportunity offered, and now reposing in Fondren, reflects such diverse interests as to be highly suitable for personal gifts, memorial or other:

Benjamin Martin, Miscellaneous Correspondence. 4 vols., from 1755. \$29.40. Really a periodical, and a rare one, usually found only in badly scattered parts, even in large libraries.

Sir Thomas Urquhart, The Life and Death of the Admirable Crichton. Repr. The Pleiad, 1927. \$2.94.

Archibald Thorburn, British Birds. 4 vols. 1925.
\$23.80..

W. A. Churchill, Watermarks in Paper. Amsterdam,
1935. \$45.00..

Giovanni Gentile, Giordano Bruno. Florence, 1920.
\$3.50.

Subligny, The Mock-Clelia, translated from the
French. London, 1678. \$16.80.

John Gay, Fables. 2 vols. London, 1793. \$23.91.
Beautifully bound, printed, and illustrated.

George Crabbe, The News-Paper. First edition,
London, 1785. \$11.34.

Another variegated group of things we'd like to
try for:

Francis Maseres, A Dissertation on the Use of
the Negative Sign of Algebra. London, 1758.
\$4.20.

Henry Brooke. The Fool of Quality. First
edition, 5 vols., 1766-70. \$12.60. An
important novel.

Daniel Baker, Poems upon Several Occasions.
London, 1697. \$16.00.

Account of the Progress of the Reformation of
Manners. Twelfth edition, 1704. \$4.20. A
burning issue about 1700, and still not
irrelevant.

Goethe, Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit.

First edition, 5 vols., Tubingen, 1811-22. The great autobiography. \$50.00.

British Museum Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits.

4 vols. 1908-14. \$8.82. A very reasonable price.

Mrs. Piozzi, Letters to and from the Late S. Johnson, London, 1788. \$4.20. Of great Johnsonian interest, and usually considered a signal example of how not to edit letters.

The following entries -- we can hardly call them "items" -- should be prefaced with a discussion of the nature of microfilm, the nature of basic reference materials, the heavy costs of binding and storing newspapers, and other weighty matters. We postpone such discussion, and for the present put the following figures down pointblank:

London Times on microfilm, 1785-1947, 85,605 feet, price \$4,875.00

New York Times on microfilm, 1851-1938, 102,170 feet, price \$4,597.65.

Fondren Library would be glad to receive old programs, playbills, announcements, and other records of theatrical performances in Houston and Galveston before 1900.

One of the most impressive sights a returned traveler can report is the sign "Bibliotheque -- Silence" displayed in front of the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. The traffic roars, and the taxis honk, and it is doubtful whether in the course of history a sound was ever muted or muffled because of the sign. Still, it's a good idea.

A. D. McKillop

MUSIC NOTES

This year Rice Institute is offering for the first time a long-needed and long-desired course in music, given by Rice's newly established "music lecturer" Mr. Arthur E. Hall. A composer himself as well as a teacher and choral director, Mr. Hall places his emphasis or understanding the elements and formative principles of music--explaining how rhythm, melody, harmony, tonality, and tone color are combined according to the fundamentals of form, style, and expression. It is a course in "what music is and how it is created...requiring a love of music, but no previous musical training."

A new course at Rice means, naturally, a new demand on Fondren Library. Mr. Hall says he is constantly being surprised by what Fondren does have--and by what it doesn't. "You have the books this man used to write his book, but you don't have the book he wrote!" Back files of important periodicals, such as Musical Quarterly; standard books for general use; and many additions to the reference collection will soon be needed as one course expands--we hope--into a full-fledged department of music.

Helen Chillman

GIFTS

During the period since the last appearance of The Fly-Leaf, the Library has received a number of welcome gifts in addition to the dues and monetary contributions of Friends, and gifts for the purchase of memorial books.

Of campus groups, the Pre-Medical Society contributed over \$27 for the purchase of books in physiology; the Owen Wister Literary Society Alumnae added \$150 to the fund from which the ever-popular current fiction shelf is replenished; the Elizabeth Baldwin Literary Society Alumnae raised \$298, from which a Spencer Delineascope slide projector, the best type available, was purchased. This fine piece of equipment will be of the greatest utility to many speakers in the Lecture Lounge. The Rice Hillel presented the first volume of the new Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation and will add other volumes as they are published.

Various useful volumes were presented by Mrs. A. E. Ayres, Professor J. L. Battista, William Bridgwater, J. H. Cloud, Mrs. Tom Connally, Morgan J. Davis, Lincoln Durst, and Ann Gossman (who also contributed phonograph records).

Mrs. Harry Irwin made a welcome gift of some 450 pieces of music, many of them the popular songs which the Library is collecting and of which Mr. Ray Wood has given many titles. Mrs. Irwin also presented the Library with an upright piano which, although past its first bloom of youth, was most welcome and has already been of service to Mr. Arthur Hall, the new and popular Lecturer in Music. Mr. Edward B. Mayo also added substantially to the Fondren's music collection.

Linneas of Texas, a Swedish-American Woman's group, helped to fill a wide gap in the Library's collections with 33 volumes on Swedish culture and topography, many of them books of surpassing beauty.

Mr. Andrew M. MacMahon contributed long runs of many important physics journals, as well as a Leica Camera and accessories; this last piece of equipment should enable the Library staff to do some microfilm work on its own account.

Mrs. C. A. Greaner gave the Library a fascinating old Valentine, mounted for display purposes, from the days of George Washington; C. B. Mohle, Oscar A. Morgner and Professor Niels Nielsen each gave files of valuable periodicals. Mr. Robert T. Morris gave a volume of military regulations of the Texas War Department, published in Houston in 1839 and thus one of the earliest books with a local imprint.

The National Council of Catholic Women contributed over \$33 for subscriptions to Roman Catholic periodicals; other welcome gifts, of books, magazines, and pictures were received from Compton Rees, Jr.: Rolle, Jewett & Beck; Jay H. Rose; J. A. Sherred; Julia Bishop Smith; Richard T. Swim; Professor Roy V. Talmage; and Professor Willard M. Thorp, whose interest in Rice and its Library continues even though he has now returned to Princeton.

Last, and least in size but not in charm and value was the gift by William H. McCarthy, Jr., of The Rosenbach Company in New York, of a first edition of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's first book, An Essay on Mind, with Other Poems, London, 1826.

Lengthy consideration by your Board of Directors, since Spring, has been given to the type of program most ideal for the Friends meeting. It has been concluded that our meetings should occur not more than semi-annually and that the programs should be in the nature of a "dividend" to the membership. The Fall gathering will be announced shortly by the usual postcard. See you there.

Talbott Wilson

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